

second 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, under the control of time of the Democrats, I yield 20 minutes to the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and 10 minutes to the Senator from Arkansas, Mr. PRYOR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

#### FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER AWARENESS DAY

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, as the distinguished minority leader and distinguished Senator from Nevada have spoken to this morning, today is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day in the United States.

The ninth hour of the ninth day in the ninth month having arrived, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate observe a moment of reflection to remind women who are pregnant and those women who may become pregnant that no amount of alcohol, none at all, is safe during the 9 months of pregnancy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The Senate observed a moment of reflection.)

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, by raising awareness one moment at a time, we can attempt to minimize the damaging effects of drinking during pregnancy.

In late February of 1999, there was a small group of parents who were raising children afflicted with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, and this small group of parents essentially set out to change the world. The leaders of this group were Bonnie Buxton and Brian Philcox of Toronto and Teresa Kellerman of Tucson.

They were frustrated, frustrated about the lack of public awareness about fetal alcohol spectrum disorders by both the public and the professionals. These parents wondered aloud. They were communicating with one another on an online Internet support group called F-A-S link. They wondered, What if on the ninth minute of the ninth day of the ninth month we asked the world to remember that during the 9 months of pregnancy a woman should remain alcohol free. And what if we also asked the world to remember those millions of people who will never fulfill their potential because of prenatal alcohol exposure.

And at this moment, they asked: Could we begin to change the world? Can we begin to change the path that so many children have been faced with as they set out in the world burdened with the affliction they were born with, fetal alcohol disorders?

So this year, for the sixth consecutive year, communities across the world are pausing during the ninth hour to acknowledge International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day. FAS Day will be observed extensively in my home State of

Alaska with ceremonies being observed across the State.

I appreciated the comments from the minority leader about the devastating effects in his home State of South Dakota. In Alaska, we, too, are faced with incredible statistics as they relate to those who are born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

In many parts of my State, particularly in the rural parts of the State, we have villages where the amount of children born with FASD is four times the national average. The statistics are absolutely horrific.

I was in a very small community of about several hundred people during the August recess. I was approached by a woman who was a teacher. She had been out in this community for several years. Her greatest concern as a teacher was what I was going to do in my capacity in the Senate to make women aware of the consequences of drinking while pregnant. She was dealing with students coming to her classroom who were not only not able to learn but quite possibly will never be able to learn because they were born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

I am grateful the Senate is recognizing International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day and has paused to join in this worldwide moment of reflection. For this, I thank my colleagues, especially the distinguished minority leader, the Senator from South Dakota, who has joined with me in offering Senate Resolution 390 creating the first National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day earlier this year. I hope we will continue to pause in the ninth hour of the ninth day each September until fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are eradicated.

The eradication of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders is by no means an impossible dream. This is achievable. The simple truth about fetal alcohol spectrum disorders is they can be eradicated, they can be stopped, they can be wiped out if women resolve to consume no alcohol during the term of their pregnancy.

This simple prescription—no alcohol—may seem extreme, it may seem absolute, it may even seem harsh to some, but there is no gentler way to put it.

The term “fetal alcohol spectrum disorders” describes a range of conditions that can befall a child whose mother consumed alcohol during pregnancy. I will not list the technical names of each of those conditions because that is not important. What is important is that if women consume alcohol during pregnancy, they expose their unborn child to the risk of suffering one or more of the fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

It is vitally important for all women to know that fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are the No. 1 preventable cause of mental retardation and birth defects. An individual with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders can incur a life-

time health cost of over \$800,000. Children do not outgrow fetal alcohol disorders; the physical and behavioral problems can last a lifetime. When a pregnant woman consumes alcohol, it passes through her bloodstream to the unborn child. It can cause damage to the brain. It can result in low birth weight. The child, when he or she is born, may have trouble sleeping, may have trouble eating. As the child matures, he or she can have problems learning, paying attention. Some even need lifelong medical care.

It should be stressed that there is no woman who is genetically immune from the consequences of consuming alcohol during pregnancy. The message is very clear, it is very simple: In pregnancy, no amount of alcohol, no matter how small, is safe. There is no safe time. There is no safe drink. There is no safe amount. The message is, if you are pregnant, do not drink. If you drink, do not get pregnant.

Yesterday afternoon, the President of the United States wrote a message to all of those observing National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day. I ask unanimous consent the text of the President's message be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
Washington, September 8, 2004.

I send greetings to those observing National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day on September 9, 2004.

Children are a precious gift and a source of great hope for our future. To preserve their dreams and their health, we must continue to work together to increase awareness about the dangers of alcohol consumption by expectant mothers. This observance helps to educate the public about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and its effects, such as learning disabilities and mental illness, and promote healthier communities.

I applaud all those involved for your compassion and your dedication to improving the health and well-being of our children and their parents. Your efforts bring comfort to countless families and help make America a better place.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes.  
GEORGE W. BUSH.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Madam President, let me first commend my colleague from Alaska as well as my colleague from South Dakota for their very excellent statements about a problem that I understand affects their States but certainly affects every State in the Union. I hope their comments today will be of help. I know their efforts will certainly help. It is, as my colleague from Alaska has so eloquently said, very preventable. It is something that we who have the opportunity to use this bully pulpit of the Senate, as Theodore Roosevelt would say, can talk about to educate and inform people about the problem and that it is, in fact, preventable.